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LIBRARY HANDBOOK No. 7

U.S. GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS IN SMALL LIBRARIES

BY

J. I. WYER, JR.

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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

LIBRARY

THIRD EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED

JUL 8 1951

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
— AT LOS ANGELES

American Library Association
1 WASHINGTON STREET, CHICAGO

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NOTE

This pamphlet was first printed by the Minnesota library commission in June, 1904, as a part of its Publication no. 2 and reprinted as Bibliographical contribution no. 4 from the library of the University of Nebraska. A second edition slightly altered and enlarged was printed by the Wisconsin free library commission in May, 1905. The present edition is entirely recast, the lists of recommended documents revised and the whole considerably expanded. Even in its enlarged form, however, the limitations suggested by the title make it necessary to treat many topics far more briefly than in my larger pamphlet, *United States government documents*, Albany, 1906, and to omit any mention of some related matters.

J. I. W.

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U.S. GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS IN SMALL LIBRARIES

ACQUISITION

Libraries may get the printed documents of the United States Government at first hand from

(a) The office of the Superintendent of Documents (a part of the Government Printing Office).

(b) The issuing Department, Bureau or Office.

(c) Congressmen.

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS

Under present laws the Superintendent of Documents sends documents to libraries in the three following ways. Except to depository libraries no documents are sent from this office that have not been asked or ordered.

1. To depository libraries—these may be

- I Designated depositories. Now about 450 in number including all state and territorial libraries; the libraries of the 67 land grant colleges; one library for each congressional district to be designated by the Congressman from that district; and one library in any part of the state to be designated by each Senator. These libraries receive one copy of every document which the Superintendent of Documents is authorized to distribute free, amounting to about 1,000 bound volumes and pamphlets each year. Until 1908 the volumes sent to depository libraries were bound in sheep and formed what is called the

"Sheep-bound set." Since 1908 the binding has been in light colored buckram and the serial numbers have been omitted from the lettering. The designated depositories are chiefly college and reference libraries and the larger public libraries. As a designated depository library may not select from available documents, but must take everything sent, only the largest libraries value the rigid and copious privileges thus offered.

- II Geological depositories. Each Congressman may name four libraries or institutions each of which will get annually from 50 to 75 of the Monographs, Bulletins and Folios of the Geographical Survey. Neither the Annual reports of the Survey nor its Topographic Sheets are sent to geological depository libraries, of which there are now about 1,000. Their number and the total number of volumes sent to them tends to decrease.
- III Remainder libraries. The printing law of January 12, 1895, names as remainder libraries those, not designated depositories, which may be named by Congressmen (not more than three each) to which are distributed the fractional number of documents remaining of the general edition of each document, after Congress and the Departments have been supplied. In practice the resulting distribution proved so haphazard, irregular and indiscriminate that the Documents Office no longer maintains a list of remainder depositories, but whenever possible supplies desired documents on request to all libraries not receiving them otherwise.

IV Official Gazette depositories. Each Congressman may name 8 libraries to which will be sent the Official Gazette of the U.S. Patent Office, a weekly 325p. magazine containing descriptive text and illustrations of all patents granted; trade marks, prints and labels registered; alphabetical list of patentees, and inventions and legal decisions in patent cases. There are now about 775 such libraries, each of which must be separately designated. The Gazette is a bulky journal of a special and technical character, expensive to bind and should go only to those large libraries which have special use for it.

2. **To non-depository libraries on special request.**

It is only in this way that the small non-depository libraries can get any documents free from the Superintendent of Documents. He will supply any document in stock but as no current quota of many documents is delivered to the Documents Office and its stock comes chiefly from the receipt of documents no longer desired by Congress and the Departments, it follows that the service of the Documents Office to libraries in this way relates principally to documents more than a year or two old.

3. **By sale.**

The Superintendent of Documents in 1909 sold over 350,000 documents for over \$70,000. He sells for cash in advance only. It has for the past five years been the policy of the Documents Office to restrict free distribution to individuals in every way and to increase sales not only through its own office but by urging the same policy upon all government

departments. This policy has increased nearly ten-fold the sale of documents since 1904. During the same time Congress has reduced the editions of nearly all documents printed. The effect has been that the Documents Office's reduced supply has been exhausted by the increased sales and there have been fewer or none available for free distribution to non-depository libraries. Numerous priced lists on many subjects (free on application) have been issued by the Documents Office and by those departments which are large publishers.

FROM THE ISSUING DEPARTMENT, BUREAU OR OFFICE

Each Department or Bureau receives a large part of the edition of every one of its own documents and distributes them through its own mailing lists in two ways.

1. Serial publication as issued.

If you can get your library placed on the regular mailing list (and sometimes if you can not, your Congressman can) for certain reports or documents that you know you will want year after year, they will be sent as issued without special request for each number. Department mailing lists are often revised, however, though usually not without notice and opportunity for renewal. This is far the most satisfactory way for the small library to get desirable government serials such as those recommended in the selected list on a later page.

2. On special request.

This is usually a pretty satisfactory way to get single documents, though as issuing offices sometimes

refuse to send free and reply by a price-list, libraries will generally find it easier and surer to make such requests to Congressmen.

The Agriculture Department, the largest single government publisher, issues (Division of Publications, Circular 6, 1909) *Publications of the United States Department of Agriculture and how they are distributed*. The information in this circular and the liberal attitude towards libraries therein expressed are equally true of nearly all issuing offices.

FROM CONGRESSMEN

Congressmen are the largest distributors of public documents. They are also likely to be the most zealous and indiscriminate and a library often gets in this way documents for which it never asked, which it does not want and which will only be a burden to keep and care for. Congressmen not only have more copies of most documents than any one else but they get them quicker. For the non-depository library that knows just what it wants and can accurately quote the title, a request to its own Congressman or Senator is the best way to get it. Unrequested and useless documents received from Congressmen should be promptly returned to the Superintendent of Documents under franks which that office will send.

WHAT THE SMALL LIBRARY SHOULD GET

No exact, complete list of documents useful to every small library is possible. No hard and fast rules can be made. Like all book acquisition, the nature, situation and clientele of each library and its own local circumstances must help decide. No small library wants everything it

can get. Libraries should be selections of books not *collections*. Remember that every book added to a library costs so much good money (usually more than is thought) to prepare for the shelves, to catalog and even to keep standing on the shelves, unused and uncalled for when cataloged. The books in a small library must be live books, in constant use. The book rarely or never used has no place there, though it be a government document and free as air. A depository library which is too small to be one, which does not use the documents sent it, should surrender its depository privilege and supply itself in other ways with just the documents it will use.

RECOMMENDED SERIALS

The following 18 titles of selected government serials should be found in all libraries even the smallest, and the list of 18 single complete documents following them will be found of use in any library with a competent librarian. Suggested Decimal Classification numbers are given with each title and the Library of Congress catalog card numbers are added to the single documents.

U.S.—Agriculture Department. Farmers' bulletins. 630

This serial treats in a practical, simple way, subjects of special interest to farmers and gardeners. On application to the Department a library will be placed on the mailing list. The Bulletins are sent out unbound by the Department and so each library will do well to bind them in volumes of convenient size. Bulletin 8, Division of Publications is an index to Bulletins 1-250.

——— Yearbook.

630

A cyclopedia of practical, popular articles on specific topics and a description of the organization and work of the Department. No mailing list for this publication is maintained by the Department and

requests for it must be renewed each year (it is published in July) either to the Department or to Congressmen, who distribute the chief part of the edition.

Catalog cards, both author and subject (with headings printed in black ink) for each *Farmers' bulletin* and each article in the *Yearbook* can be bought from the Library of Congress; particulars are given in Bulletin 14 (second ed.) of the Card Section of the Library of Congress.

The *Yearbooks* 1894-1905 are also indexed in Bulletins 7 and 9, Division of Publications.

U.S.—Census Bureau. Abstract of the 12th census, 1900. 317.3

A comprehensive manual of the most important statistics collected at the last census. A new edition for 1910 will be issued within a year.

——— Statistical atlas. 1903. 317.3

Especially useful for its graphic representation of comparative statistical summaries.

Few small libraries will find useful all of the publications of the Census Bureau. For this reason the present Director is planning to issue Bulletins, as soon as the enumeration for 1910 is done, which shall group the matter by states in separate pamphlets. All census publications may be had by direct application to the Bureau.

U.S.—Civil Service Commission. Annual report. 351.6

Records the progress and vicissitudes of civil service, especially the organization and administration of the United States classified service. As candidates for government positions under the civil service are found in every state, the latest edition of the *Manual of examinations* should be available in all libraries. All publications of the Civil Service Commission are free on application.

U.S.—Congress. Congressional directory. 328

Contains biographical sketches of all Congressmen, Cabinet officers and Supreme Court Justices; personnel of committees; a directory of the various government offices, with brief statements of their duties and a list of the diplomatic and consular service. Three

editions embodying changes and corrections, are issued during each session of Congress. One edition a session will suffice for most libraries. Available from Congressmen.

——— Congressional record. 328

The daily record of the debates and proceedings in both houses of Congress. It should be placed in the reading room with other daily papers and it will be read as much as any of them. It is necessary to apply to your Congressman at the beginning of each session, as the mailing list for the preceding session does not hold over.

U.S.—Education Bureau. Annual report. 370

A rich storehouse of contemporary educational history, statistics, laws and information. The most important annual educational document in the land. It may be had regularly on application to the issuing office or single copies will be sent by Congressmen.

The reports 1867-1907 are minutely indexed in Bulletin 7 for 1909, published by the Bureau and distributed by it.

——— Bulletin. 370

Issued since 1906. Unbound, brief monographs on timely topics. The series also includes the annual *Bibliography of education*.

U.S.—Geological Survey. Topographic sheets. 912

About 1400 different sheets have been printed, nearly every state being represented. The eastern states are much more completely mapped than the central and western parts of the country. Each sheet is about 16×20 in. and gives in minute detail the topographic features of a quadrangular district embracing from 200 to 900 square miles. The Geological Survey will tell any inquirer what parts of any state have been thus mapped. The sheets are sold by the Survey for five cents each or 100 for \$3; stamps not accepted.

The Disbursing Clerk, Post Office Department, Washington, D.C., will also sell post-route maps of any state (in sheets, on rollers, or in pocket size), and rural-delivery maps of many sections (which can be learned on application) have also been printed.

The Forest Service distributes free an uncolored single sheet map showing location of national parks and forest reserves. The same office sells for 50 cents an attractive colored wall map 5×7 feet. The

General Land Office also sells a 5×7 foot roller map of the United States for \$1.

U.S.—Interstate Commerce Commission. Annual report on statistics of railways in the United States. 385

An invaluable compendium of statistical information. Will serve in most libraries instead of *Poor's Manual*. Sent free on application to Commission.

U.S.—Labor Bureau. Annual report. 331 . .

——— Bulletin; bi-monthly 331

——— Special reports 331

Of the utmost usefulness to the librarian who will take pains to find out what is in them. They are sent free on application to the Bureau. In 1902 the Labor Bureau issued an excellent index to these three sets as well as to the sets of labor reports from the different states. The *Special reports* appear to have been discontinued with no. 12 in 1905.

U.S.—Library of Congress. Bibliography Division. Reference lists 1898-1909.

Subject bibliographies on a great number of current historical, social and economic topics. Libraries can usually get them free on application. Though much of the material referred to will not, of course, be found in smaller libraries the lists are nevertheless useful in reference and debate work. They include references to periodicals.

U.S.—Manufactures Bureau. Consular reports. 382

Issued in three series: Daily, which libraries will not need; Monthly, which are available for libraries on application to issuing office but which are not of very great use in the smaller libraries; Special, which are issued occasionally and are not usually of a popular nature. The monthly edition contains short reports from United States Consuls all over the world on trade conditions, probable markets, suggestions for stimulating commerce, etc. The set is indexed to volume 60 in the *A.L.A. Index*. The numbers appear

in pamphlet form and it will be well for a library to keep them unbound for a year or two. If they are found useful, then apply to the Bureau for cloth bound volumes.

Smithsonian Institution. Annual report. 506

Freely distributed to libraries by the Institution. It contains short, semi-popular, well illustrated articles on a wide range of natural history topics. The A.L.A. Publishing Board sells catalog cards for each article.

U.S.—Statistics Bureau (Commerce and Labor Department).

Statistical abstract of the United States. 317.3

The most useful, comprehensive and authoritative annual summary of statistics relating to our country that is printed. It will be supplied by Congressmen.

RECOMMENDED SINGLE DOCUMENTS

The following list does not claim to show all the single documents, outside of serial sets, that are useful to small libraries. It is rather a list of a few titles which may serve to illustrate the kind of documents which libraries should watch for and get as they are published. Besides the titles of general interest noted below, every library should be alert to get the publications which are of peculiar interest in its own state or region. These abound in the different series published by the Geological Survey.

A.L.A. Catalog; 8,000 volumes for a popular library, with notes. . . . 2v. in 1, Q. Wash. 1904. 017

4-32505

Of the utmost usefulness as an aid in cataloging, classification, book selection and buying. The free distribution was meant to include every library in the country. Additional copies may be had from the Superintendent of Documents in paper, \$1.

Cutter, C: A. Rules for a dictionary catalog. Ed. 4.
173p. O. Wash. 1904. 025.3

4-32517

This fourth edition revised contains 30 pages of added rules but omits appendixes 1, 4, 6 and 7 found in the third edition. It is exactly as Mr. Cutter left it, no liberties having been taken with his manuscript.

Copies may be had free from the Commissioner of Education, Washington, D.C.

Gannett, Henry. Dictionary of altitudes. Ed. 4. 1072p.
O. Wash. 1906. (U.S. Geol. Survey, bulletin 274.
Serial no. 5014.) 557.3

GS 6-397

Serves very well as a geographical gazetteer of the United States and contains many names not in any gazetteer or atlas.

Hodge, F: W. Handbook of American Indians north of
Mexico. 2v. O. Wash. 1907. (Bureau of American
Ethnology, bulletin 30.) 970.1

7-35198

A detailed alphabetic cyclopedia of Indian biography, history, customs, arts, antiquities and institutions. The most convenient and comprehensive reference work on the subject.

Thorpe, F. N. comp. Federal and state constitutions,
colonial charters and other organic laws of states, terri-
tories and colonies. 7v. Wash. 1909. (Serial nos.
5190-94.) 342.73

9-35371

Supersedes *Poore. Charters and constitutions.*

U.S.—Animal Industry Bureau. Special report on dis-
eases of cattle and on cattle feeding. Ed. 2. 533p.
O. Wash. 1904. (Serial no. 4734.) 619.2

5-35278

U.S.—Animal Industry Bureau. Special report on diseases of the horse. Ed. 3. 608p. O. Wash. 1907. (Serial no. 5205.)

619.1
8-8129

More than a million copies have been printed of this perennially popular book.

U.S.—Congress. Abraham Lincoln, James A. Garfield, William McKinley. 246p. Q. Wash. 1903. (Serial no. 4432.)

92
3-27506

A collection and republication of the memorial addresses delivered in Congress on the three martyr presidents, by George Bancroft, J. G. Blaine and John Hay respectively.

Ask your Congressman to get it for you.

——— **Biographical Congressional Directory, 1774-1903,** Continental Congress to the 57th Congress. 900p. Q. Wash. 1903 (Serial no. 4539.)

328.73
3-31009

Also includes biographies of the executive officers of the government 1789-1903. Issued in paper at 90c, cloth \$1, and will be sent depository libraries in sheep as serial No. 4539. Your Congressman should be able to tell you whether it is to be had free and how.

——— **Sherman, a memorial in art, oratory, and literature** by the Society of the Army of the Tennessee. 410p. Q. Wash. 1904. (Serial no. 4625.)

92
5-9042

Memorial volume recording the proceedings at the unveiling of the statue to General W. T. Sherman in Washington, Oct. 15, 1903.

U.S.—Congress—Senate. Papers relating to the election of senators by direct vote of the people. 91p. Wash. 1908. (60th Congress, 1st session, Senate doc. 512.)

Includes a speech by George F. Hoar, list of principal speeches and reports made in Congress in recent years, reprint of the principal

documents introduced in Congress, and an abstract of laws relating to election of United States senators. Useful for debate material.

U.S.—Education Bureau. Statistics of public, society and school libraries having 5,000 volumes and over in 1908. 215p. O. Wash. 1909. (Bulletin 1909, no. 5.) 027.073
E9-1080

Useful reference volume for the librarian's desk.

U.S.—Ethnology Bureau. Tlingit myths and texts recorded by J. R. Swanton. 451p. O. Wash. 1909. (Bulletin 39.) 497
9-26433

The Tlingit Indians live in Alaska. This book is an English rendering of the chief part of their interesting mythology.

U.S.—Geological Survey. Forest reserves (in Annual report, v. 19, pt. 5 and v. 20, pt. 5. Serial nos. 3763, 3923.).

Interesting descriptions of the great forests of the United States illustrated by many beautiful photographic reproductions of mountain and forest scenery.

U.S.—Hygienic Laboratory. Milk and its relation to the public health. 834p. O. Wash. 1909. (Bulletin 56.) 614.32

A revised and enlarged edition of Bulletin 41. Chapters on Ice cream; Infant feeding; Dairy sanitation; etc.

U.S.—Insular Affairs, Bureau of. Pronouncing gazetteer and geographical dictionary of the Philippine Islands, with maps, charts and illustrations. 933p. O. Wash. 1902. (Serial no. 4240.) 919.14
2-29030

Sold in cloth binding for \$2.10 by the Superintendent of Documents.

U.S.—Library of Congress. Report on Star-spangled banner, Hail Columbia, America, Yankee Doodle; by O. G. T. Sonneck. 164p. 1909. 784.4

9-35010

For sale by Superintendent of Documents at 85c. There is no free distribution.

U.S.—Printing Joint Committee. John Paul Jones Commemoration at Annapolis, April 24, 1906. 210p. Q. Wash. 1907. (Serial no. 5039.) 92

8-35061

Much interesting biographic and historic matter. Good pictures. A book of real and permanent value.

SOME UNIMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

The following are conspicuous serial documents which from their titles might suggest usefulness to the small library but which for one reason or another will be in such very infrequent request as to make their acquisition by any but large or special libraries of very doubtful wisdom.

American ephemeris and nautical almanac

Army list

Experiment station record

List of merchant vessels

Monthly weather review

Specifications and drawings of patents

War of the Rebellion records. About 163 v.

ARRANGEMENT

Designated depositories. The designated depository libraries, especially the large ones, will naturally arrange the documents in the "sheep-bound" or "Congressional" set by serial number supplying numbers for the first 3344

volumes from the *Checklist* of 1895 and for the volumes after 5215 (when the Documents Office discontinued the numbering on the volumes) from the schedules in the end of each volume of the *Document* or *Consolidated Index*. It will be a matter of regret and some extra work to the depository libraries which wish to preserve the very convenient serial number arrangement that the Documents Office finds it impossible to deliver bound volumes promptly and to letter the serial numbers on them before delivery. As however, under present laws it would mean twelve to eighteen months delay to wait till the serial numbers can be determined and lettered on the volumes, it is safe to say that libraries much prefer to get the bound volumes promptly and themselves put on the serial numbers when assigned. Other alternatives for arrangement are discussed in detail in the author's *United States Government Documents*. Albany, 1906, p. 37-39. The present status of the binding, distribution and arrangement of the documents sent to depository libraries is set forth in the *Monthly Catalogue* for February, 1910, p. 373-78.

Non-depository libraries. The small library, indeed any library not a designated depository (unless it be the very largest), should classify sets or single volumes of government documents exactly like any other books and shelve them with other books on the same subjects. The *Reports of the U.S. Commissioner of Education* will be classified and shelved with the other books on education; the *Water Supply and Irrigation papers* with other books on irrigation, etc. It is to help in such classification that the suggested Decimal classification numbers are given in the lists of recommended documents on earlier pages. In short, for purposes of classification, forget that they are government

documents and incorporate them into the subject arrangement of the library exactly as would be done with so many ordinary books. There is no reason, except in large depository libraries maintaining a "serial number" arrangement, why government documents should be shelved in a separate room or alcove, but every reason why a library should be as much of a unit as possible, with all the books on a given subject in the fewest possible places. No non-depository library (save perhaps the very largest) will ever undertake a serial number arrangement. If such a library should fall heir to a nearly complete set of Congressional documents the wisest thing it could do would be to select the volumes needed to fill out such sets as, after careful thought, it had decided to maintain, and then to sell or exchange all the others. It is foolish to keep useless documents or to start useless sets just because the books are offered to you for nothing.

Unbound Documents. Many useful government documents come in pamphlet form. When these continue a regular series or form a part of a set, such as separate numbers of the *Consular Reports* or *Farmers' Bulletins*, their receipt should be noted on the checklist like any other serial, the call number marked on the upper left corner of each and the pamphlets shelved in boxes just after the last bound volume of the set. When pamphlets do not continue regular sets or are complete in one number, two courses are open:

- 1 They may be bound at once if large and valuable enough to justify cost.
- 2 They may be treated like any other pamphlets, i.e. classified and shelved with other pamphlets on the same subject.

Never accession pamphlets. Wait till they are bound and then accession the bound volume. It is impossible to give in detail the different peculiarities of many government serials in manner and form of original issue, e.g. what documents or series are issued only in pamphlet form, which ones the government binds, in what various forms and how bound copies of these may be got. This comes only from experience.

CATALOGING

Intelligent and complete cataloging of government documents requires intimate knowledge of the organization of the national government, of the duties and functions of the various departments, commissions, bureaus, etc., and a clear understanding of the political and historical relations between the documents themselves and the bodies responsible for them; between government documents and government authors.

AUTHOR CATALOGING

"U.S. Headings." Full and orthodox cataloging will require the use of some form of the "U.S. Headings" for author entry, as they are used, e.g. in the list of Recommended Serials, p. 10-14. The chief difficulty will be to determine the exact form to use and to be absolutely uniform therein. Without going into the reasons pro and con in this important and much discussed subject, it is here recommended that where full author cataloging is desired the author headings used in the catalogs issued from the office of the Superintendent of Documents be followed. These are found in *"Author headings for United States public*

documents as used in the official catalogs of the Superintendent of Documents." Ed. 2. July 1, 1907 (Bulletin 9).

Later usage, new and changed headings may be found in the usual appendix *Governmental Authors* to volumes 7 and 8 of the *Document Catalogue* and in the recent numbers of the *Monthly Catalogue*.

Older headings for offices, commissions, etc., now non-existent may be found in the first edition (1903) of the above named pamphlet; in the lists of *Governmental Authors* at the end of each of the first six volumes of the *Document Catalogue*; on the printed cards (but not in inverted form) of the Library of Congress; and in such printed library catalogs as that of the Peabody Institute Library.

Are "U.S. Headings" desirable? The usual plan of author entry under "U.S." followed by name of issuing office is arbitrary, artificial, confusing, never used by the public and hard to use even by the library staff. The matter is complicated by the two alternatives of Inversion and Non-inversion; The Superintendent of Documents office using the former in its catalogs and the Library of Congress using the latter on its printed cards. Again there is the uncertainty resulting from frequent changes of the names and jurisdictions of many government offices, necessitating either recataloging or a wilderness of nearly useless cross references. In a small or medium public library it may be best wholly to disregard the "U.S. Headings," using for main entry title or personal name whenever possible (as described in next two paragraphs) and in other cases omitting any author entry whatever. It will be objected that it is the author card which is first consulted to learn the library's holdings of a given title. True, but a subject card will

serve instead and can usually be readily located in the catalog for any particular set or document while the set itself on the shelves or the shelf list card can be consulted more quickly still.

Title entry. Main entry under title is recommended whenever it is distinctive or commonly used. Certainly for the *Farmers' Bulletins*; *Consular Reports*; *Congressional Record*; *Congressional Directory*; *Yearbook of the Department of Agriculture*; *Statistical Abstract of the United States*; *Treaties in force*; *A.L.A. Catalog* and all other similar titles, it is more sensible and useful than the "U.S. Headings."

Personal entry. Personal entry is the use, as author entry, of the name of the man who wrote the document, not the name of the office that prepared it. Obviously with annual reports, laws, many serials and the greater number of government documents there can be no personal author entry. Personal entry is more useful than any "U.S. Heading" but may be carried too far. It is unwise to make author entry for every *Farmers' Bulletin* and each chapter in the *Yearbook of the Department of Agriculture*. The different numbers in the several series of publications of the Geological Survey, however, seem properly to claim personal author entry. In "full" orthodox cataloging, personal author entry will usually be a secondary and not the main entry. If "short" cataloging is followed and no U.S. Headings used, personal entry will often be the main entry. Personal entry is certainly important, nay, imperative when a document is large or significant enough to be likely to be referred to by the name of the author rather than the name or number of the series.

Complete sets. In cataloging government documents it is always desirable and frequently difficult to ascertain

just what volumes are required to form complete sets and just where and how such volumes were published. This work, frequently intricate and perplexing, takes much time. In a way it is not so important for smaller libraries: they may merely catalog what they have, but if a library is (as it should be) constantly trying to complete such sets as it has decided to be of value to it, it then becomes necessary to know what volumes are required. The most useful helps in this are the *Checklist* of 1895; the *Tables and Index* of 1902, both of which will be superseded by the new *Checklist* to appear in 1911. The many lists of their publications issued by the various government offices (and fully enumerated and described in my larger pamphlet) are also useful in careful cataloging.

SUBJECT CATALOGING

It is for their contents on various topics, not as books or pamphlets by such and such authors, that government documents are chiefly useful. Subject cataloging therefore is far more useful than author entry. In doing this subject cataloging then, whether primary or analytic, the following points should be noted:

- 1 The Documents Office furnishes no printed catalog cards for government documents.
- 2 Care should be taken not to duplicate work which has already been done in printed indexes to sets: e.g. it would be foolish to analyze *Farmers' Bulletins* 1-250 which have been carefully indexed both by author and subject.
- 3 The Library of Congress prints analytic cards for all the principal government serials and for many separate documents. The Library of Congress

numbers by which these cards may be ordered are printed with many items in the *Monthly Catalogue*.

USE

The utmost use of government documents depends upon

- 1 Having all indexes covering the documents in the library
- 2 Intelligent analytic subject cataloging.
- 3 Personal familiarity with contents.

Indexes. The general document indexes (disregarding the many department, set or series indexes) are the following:

Poore, B: P. Descriptive catalogue of the government publications of the United States, 1774-1881. 1392p. F. Wash. 1885. (Serial no. 2268.)

This, the pioneer general index, will be of use only in libraries that have large numbers of the early congressional documents.

To the small library which limits its collection of government documents to all or any of the sets previously recommended in this pamphlet, this index will be of no use as only 4 of those sets date back to 1881.

Ames, J: G. Comprehensive index to the publications of the United States government, 1881-93. 2 v. Q. Wash. 1905. (Serial nos. 4745-46.)

U.S.—Documents Office. Catalogue of the public documents of the 53rd-58th Congress and all departments of the government, 1893-1905. v. 1-7 Q. Wash. 1896-1908. (Serial nos. 3442, 3552, 3715, 3838, 4210, 4554, 4901.)

A straight dictionary catalog of authors and subjects and a model of complete, clear, accurate and intelligent cataloging. The annual

reports of all departments of the government are analyzed. This is a minute, complete key to the great store-house of information not only in the documents of the Congressional set but in those printed independently by the different departments. It is essential to every library and should be supplemented by the *Monthly Catalogue* (2d item below). Each volume covers a single Congress. Volume 8 will appear in the summer of 1910 and volume 9 is well under way.

———— Index to the subjects of the Documents and Reports and to the Committees, Senators and Representatives presenting them, with tables of the same in numerical order, being the "Consolidated index" provided for by the act of January 12, 1895. v. 1—date, O. Wash. 1897—date.

One volume is issued for each session of Congress. As it covers only the documents in the Congressional set it is of little or no use to small, non-depository libraries. It is from the schedules in the back of this index that depository libraries maintaining the serial set must now get the serial numbers for current volumes, no longer affixed by the Documents Office. Fourteen volumes have appeared, the last covering the first session of the 60th Congress. The serial numbers are 3455, 3553, 3587, 3716, 3839, 4021, 4211, 4398, 4555, 4752, 4901, 5057, 5214, 5371.

———— Catalogue of United States public documents, 1895—date. v. 1—date. Wash. 1895—date.

Commonly called the *Monthly Catalogue*. Useful to all libraries large and small, as the only complete list of current documents as published. It will be sent to any library on request to the Documents Office. The quarterly index which cumulates at the end of the year makes this catalog of use in reference work. Many entries are accompanied by Library of Congress catalog card numbers.

The third and fifth of above indexes are the most important in small non-depository libraries. Any of them will be supplied in bound form by the Documents Office, as

explained in its Circular 23, which has on hand a considerable stock of each.

Personal familiarity. The person, whether librarian, reference librarian or loan clerk, who is to be intimately associated with government documents should make it a point to examine with more or less care everything of that nature which reaches the library. He should do more than glance at the back of a book or the cover of a pamphlet. He should have the instinct for knowing quickly a pamphlet or book which contains really useful material and should make proper note of it. Matter of special local value should be promptly noted and brought to the attention of those patrons of the library whom it will interest. Do not brand a book or a set "useless" because it is never used. With the indexes now available if any one of these recommended sets is not used the fault is more likely to be with the librarian than with the documents.

Current documents. It is not a very easy matter to follow the publication of current government documents and to know which are of interest and value to small libraries. The *Monthly Catalogue* gives a complete list. But its very completeness is confusing for there are no notes to tell what small libraries want to know, and the piquant comments in its introductory pages sometimes seem meant to sell the special and technical titles rather than to draw attention to the widely popular ones. The *Eclectic Library Catalog* published quarterly by the H. W. Wilson Co. indexes recent government publications deemed most useful in a small library and prints in each number a list of those indexed. The selection is carefully made. The *A.L.A. Booklist* frequently includes government publications in its regular lists and often (Nov. 1909, Jan. and Mar.

1910) prints a separate list of current issues. Some government offices like the Library of Congress and the Department of Agriculture, issue lists of their own publications which give more information than the *Monthly Catalogue*. These lists can always be had on application.

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